

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
11 MAY 2022
FINAL REPORT OF THE
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE &
SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
LOCALITY WORKING FROM A CHILDREN'S SERVICES
PERSPECTIVE**

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AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. The aim of the investigation was to examine what impact the locality working pilots in Newport and North Ormesby were having on Children's Services.

MAYOR'S/COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

2. The scrutiny of this topic fits within the following priorities of the Mayor and Council:-
 - People – Children and Young People: "We will show Middlesbrough's children that they matter and work to make our town safe and welcoming and to improve outcomes for all children and young people."
 - People – Vulnerability: "We will work to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable."

COUNCIL'S THREE CORE AIMS

3. The scrutiny of this topic aligns with the Council's three core aims as detailed in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024¹:-
 - People – Working with communities and other public services in Middlesbrough to improve the lives of local people.
 - Place – Securing improvements in Middlesbrough's housing, infrastructure and attractiveness, improving the town's reputation, creating opportunities for local people and improving our finances.
 - Business – Promoting investment in Middlesbrough's economy and making sure we work as effectively as possible to support our ambitions for People and Place".

TERMS OF REFERENCE

4. The terms of reference for the Scrutiny Panel's investigation were as follows:-
 - A) To examine how Locality Working operates and will be developed in the pilot areas.
 - B) To understand how the impact of Locality Working for Children's Services will be measured and how any future roll out of the model in other areas of the town will be determined.
 - C) To identify best practice from other local authorities where locality working for Children's Services is working well.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/EVIDENCE GATHERED

5. In line with the Terms of Reference, the Scrutiny Panel gathered a range of evidence in relation to the Locality Working pilot model currently operating in Newport and North Ormesby and its impact specifically in relation to Children's Services.

¹ Middlesbrough Council's Strategic Plan 2021-24

The Place Based Approach/Locality Working

6. A place based approach, or locality working, involves a system change to the current operational delivery model across Council services, with the aim of achieving joined-up systems and a multi-agency approach between statutory organisations, relevant partners and the community, and to develop collaborative approaches to address the underlying causes of community problems whilst building strength and resilience within the community.
7. Evidence shows that there are benefits in having multi-agency teams working together from one location. For example, in some instances, the need for referrals can be reduced as a simple conversation with a member of the team can identify the most appropriate course of action, and through better information sharing, there are opportunities to identify support needs early and, therefore, proactively intervene to prevent crisis.
8. Another benefit of Locality Working is improved access for the local community as they have a single point of referral via the locality team. Quite often, people in need of advice or help require more than one service and may need multiple services' support.

Locality Working in Middlesbrough

9. On 8 October 2019, the Council's Executive approved proposals to implement two locality working pilot programmes, in Newport and North Ormesby, which would run for a period of two years.
10. Data gathered from a wide range of sources, including directly from the community and analysis on demand for Council services, supported the proposal for the pilot programmes to be implemented in the Newport and North Ormesby wards.
11. Through the pilot programmes there is an opportunity to 'make every contact count' and to focus on delivering services based on the service recipients and the communities in which they live.
12. In the context of Middlesbrough as a whole, life expectancy is 13.3 years lower for men and 11.2 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Middlesbrough than in the least deprived areas.
13. Public Health profiles show that Middlesbrough has high levels of suicide as a significant cause of death in young adults. It is also seen as an indicator of underlying rates of mental ill-health.
14. Across Middlesbrough in Year 6, 23% of children are classified as obese, in North Ormesby 34.8% of reception children are classed as overweight or obese, compared to the England average of 22.2%.
15. Levels of teenage pregnancy, GCSE attainment, breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy are also worse than the England average.
16. Across Middlesbrough the rate for self-harm hospital admissions is worse than the average for England. This represents 486 admissions per year in Middlesbrough.

Background – Why Newport Ward?

17. Newport Ward is the **fifth** most deprived ward in Middlesbrough (moving from the 123rd most deprived ward nationally in 2007 to the 38th most deprived ward nationally in 2015). In addition, Newport has:-

- The third highest number of recorded racially motivated crimes (with only Central and North Ormesby having more).
- The second highest rate of female victims of violent crime².
- The third highest number of alcohol-related hospital admissions to James Cook University Hospital³.
- The third highest number of alcohol and substance related ambulance pick-ups⁴.
- High levels of anti-social behaviour.
- Second highest levels of fly-tipping⁵.

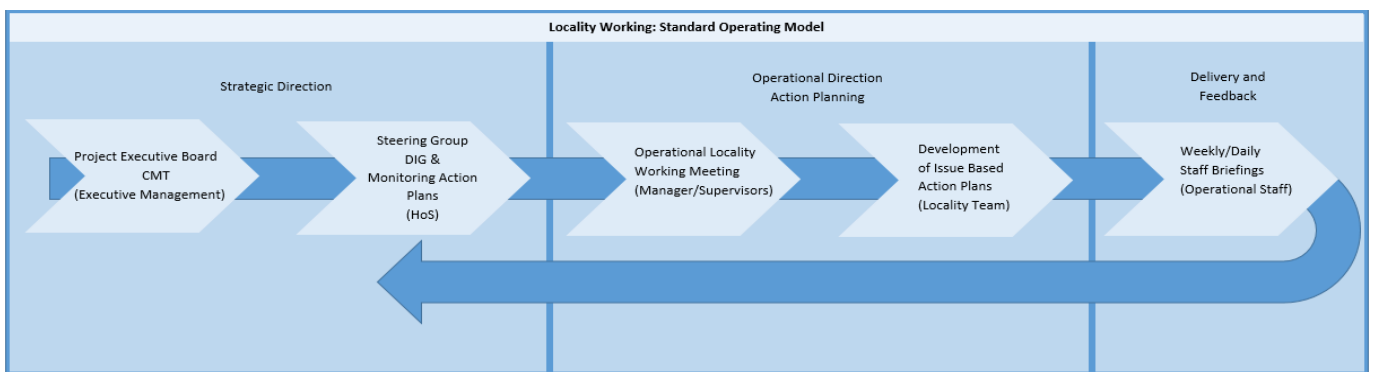
Background – Why North Ormesby Ward?

18. North Ormesby is **the most** deprived ward in Middlesbrough and **second** most deprived ward in England. In addition, North Ormesby has:-

- The second highest number of recorded racially motivated crimes.
- The highest rate of female victims of violent crime⁶.
- The highest rate of male victims of violent crime⁷.
- The second highest number of alcohol and substance related ambulance pick-ups⁸.
- The highest level of anti-social behaviour⁹.
- Second highest levels of fly-tipping¹⁰.
- Highest number of Children Looked After (with unemployment levels more than six times the national average and more than 60% of children deemed to be living in poverty).

Locality Working – Governance Structure

19. Below is a flow diagram showing the governance structure for the Locality Working standard operating model.



20. Strategic direction is provided by the Project Executive Board and Corporate Management Team made up of senior managers within the Council. A strategic Design and Implementation Group

² Recorded 2018/19 per 1,000 population.

³ Recorded admissions 2018/19.

⁴ Recorded data 2018/19.

⁵ Incidents reported to Middlesbrough Council in 2019.

⁶ Recorded 2018/19 per 1,000 population.

⁷ Recorded 2018/19 per 1,000 population.

⁸ Recorded data 2018/29

⁹ Cleveland Police data 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2019.

¹⁰ Incidents reported to Middlesbrough Council in 2019.

(DIG) was initially established until the pilots were up and running and a Steering Group to monitor all locality Action Plans remains in place. The strategic direction feeds into the operational direction and action planning via the Operational Locality Working meeting with Managers and Supervisors and the development of issue-based action plans within the locality teams. Finally, delivery and feedback is undertaken through the weekly or daily staff briefings with operational staff.

21. Meetings at an operational level are well attended by appropriate partner representatives in both Newport and North Ormesby. The meetings have been held virtually due to the Covid pandemic but this has enabled consistent communication with key partners. In addition, both Locality Neighbourhood Managers communicate on a regular basis and often attend each other's locality meetings in order to keep up to date with what is happening in each area.

Implementation of the Pilot Programmes

22. On 18 February 2020, the Executive approved a phased approach to the implementation of the Locality Working Pilots in Newport and North Ormesby, together with the respective staffing resource allocations based on demand and need within the communities.
23. Staffing resources were initially set, with scope to adapt and develop over time as the pilots became more embedded. However, the aim of locality working is not to merge staff from existing teams together in a single team under one roof, but rather to work as a collective from within their own departments and organisations. Multi-agency liaison is taking place much more freely under the locality working model and designated bases – at the Co-operative Building, Linthorpe Road for the Newport Team and North Ormesby Hub, Derwent Street for the North Ormesby Team – are now established.
24. There are some differences between the two pilot programmes, mainly in terms of the partners involved and management of the two pilots.
25. The Panel heard that during the process of establishing the locality working pilot the Council was keen to ensure that the programme was not perceived as an exclusive Council project. Following discussions with Thirteen Housing and other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to ascertain whether there was interest in partnering with the Council to deliver the pilot, Thirteen Housing agreed to partner the Council and to part fund both of the locality Neighbourhood Manager posts.
26. North Ormesby already had an existing Neighbourhood Manager in post which was funded 50/50 by Thirteen Housing and Middlesbrough Council, therefore, this post was incorporated into the pilot model for North Ormesby. The post holder in North Ormesby has a Thirteen Housing contract of employment.
27. In Newport, the successful candidate for the post of Neighbourhood Manager was already employed by Middlesbrough Council, therefore, the post holder has a Middlesbrough Council contract of employment.
28. A series of priorities and objectives were established for both localities based on data analysis and a range of community engagement exercises and surveys to ascertain community priorities and aspirations. As a result, nine key themes were developed within both pilot localities, together with appropriate service leads. Individual multi-agency Action Plans were developed in respect of each of the thematic areas and these are reviewed on a monthly basis.
29. The nine themes are as follows (with the appropriate service lead identified in brackets):-
 - Making people feel safe (Police)

- Healthier population (Public Health)
 - Better economic outcomes (Education & Partnerships Team)
 - Better outcomes for children (Children's Social Care)
 - Improved environmental standards (Environment & Community Services)
 - Improved physical appearance (Environment & Community Services)
 - Improved customer experience (Stronger Communities)
 - Improved community capacity (Thirteen Housing)
 - Improved perceptions (Thirteen Housing)
30. All locality action plans have smart targets and actions and are linked to the Performance Management Framework (PMF) indicators. These indicators are also used to monitor impact and progress.

Who is involved in Locality Working?

31. A wide range of Council services and partners are involved in working in the locality working pilot areas. Partnership involvement is crucial to the success of locality working in order to work in a collaborative way to improve outcomes for the people of Middlesbrough.
32. As each locality has its own priority issues, this determines the partners that need to be involved in that area and the level of engagement required, although many services and partners are common to both localities. Key partners include statutory services such as Police, Health, Housing providers, some specialist commissioned services, local voluntary and community organisations and further links to schools, GPs, pharmacies and other partners, and of course, residents.

General impact so far

33. In terms of impact, it is difficult to put a figure on how many people the locality working pilots have reached as the outcomes the pilots aim to achieve may impact on people who do not necessarily engage with staff. For example, improvements in environmental standards – the 'flying squad' works across the full ward and everyone living near an area that has been improved will benefit from improvements, however, there may be no direct interaction with some of those residents. This does not mean that they have not been impacted by locality working. Another example of reaching the community through locality working is the numerous Covid vaccine pop up sites within both localities achieved through joint working particularly with Public Health colleagues. The locality teams aim to positively impact everyone living within the wards in some way.
34. The locality team also engages with residents and businesses across both areas, including schools, community groups, voluntary sector organisations and youth outreach. The teams regularly liaise with local business owners to ensure their views and concerns are included within the action planning process.
35. Resident surveys show that public perception has improved within both localities. Surveys were carried out with residents in Newport and North Ormesby, initially in September 2020, with further surveys linked to indicators undertaken in March and September 2021. The results of the surveys, in relation people feeling safe, are as follows:-

Newport	<u>September 2020</u>	<u>March 2021</u>	<u>September 2021</u>
Feeling safe during the day	31.18%	35.49%	68.65%
Feeling safe after dark	9.68%	12.9%	48.98%
North Ormesby			
Feeling safe during the day	32.61%	51.51%	77.14%
Feeling safe after dark	13.04%	21.21%	31.42%

36. This shows that there has already been a significant improvement in perceptions of safety in both localities.
37. In addition, surveys have also shown that the number of people indicating their intent to continue living in the area for longer has increased. On that note, in 2021, house prices in North Ormesby experienced the fastest increase than anywhere else in Teesside with an increase of 51% on the previous year¹¹
38. Impact data more specific to Children’s Services within the two localities is provided starting at paragraph 61.

Better Outcomes for Children

39. The ‘Better Outcomes for Children’ Action Plan has the key objectives of: creating stronger families; increasing educational attainment; reducing child sexual exploitation (CSE) and criminal exploitation and reducing the numbers of children looked after.
40. Staff from Children’s Services have been in-situ virtually within the localities for some time, including dedicated Officers from Children’s Social Care, Early Help and the Risk and Resilience teams. All attend weekly officer meetings and the Children and Families Working Group to look at key issues as they arise.
41. The Children’s Services Action Plan is led by a Senior Social Worker and is reviewed on a monthly basis. Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) indicators, whether negative or positive, are fed back to the Strategic group for further discussion/assistance and regular progress reports are produced for assurance purposes and for the Executive.

¹¹ Evening Gazette article 05/02/22 [The Teesside neighbourhoods with the fastest growing house prices - Teesside Live \(gazettelive.co.uk\)](https://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside/2022/02/05/teesside-neighbourhoods-with-the-fastest-growing-house-prices/)

Children's Services in the Localities

42. In addition to staff from Early Help and Children's Social Care working across both localities for some time, the Risk and Resilience Team is leading on a multi-agency plan to tackle child exploitation and youth outreach work is delivered in both localities.

Early Help

43. Stronger Families, or Early Help, currently have three dedicated Senior Practitioners allocated to the localities – two assigned to Newport and one assigned to North Ormesby.
44. Any referrals requiring Early Help support in Newport and North Ormesby are received via the Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH), the 'front door' of Children's Services (in the same way referrals are received across the whole of Middlesbrough) and are allocated immediately to the Practitioners working within the localities. Case allocations are made on a daily basis to ensure families receive a swift response, and families are contacted by the Practitioner within three days.
45. Sometimes cases are 'stepped down' to Early Help services from Social Work teams where social care intervention is no longer required, but some form of additional support is still needed.
46. When Early Help Practitioners within the localities have high caseloads, the cases are allocated to Practitioners across the wider service. Whilst Team Managers and Assistant Managers work hard to try to avoid this happening, this is not always possible as demand for early help services across Middlesbrough is high.

Caseloads

47. As of November 2021, the caseloads open to Early Help Practitioners in both localities was as follows:-

	Senior Practitioner North Ormesby	Senior Practitioner (1) Newport	Senior Practitioner (2) Newport	Totals
No. of children on caseload	34	29	28	91
No. of families	14	14	13	41
Children whose cases are open for less than 6 months	22	16	20	58

48. It is worth noting, when looking at the above figures, that the number of families being worked with is significantly lower than the number of children being worked with. This is because Practitioners work with every child within each household and, therefore, work with multiple children per family.
49. The Panel heard that the ideal number of caseloads for an Early Help Practitioner is around 25-26 children. Whilst caseloads are slightly high, they are at a manageable level and have begun to reduce.

Children's Social Care (Social Work Teams)

50. Initially, one Social Worker was allocated to each of the localities but it was soon discovered that this was insufficient to cope with demand. Resources were subsequently increased to two dedicated Social Workers in Newport and three dedicated Social Workers in North Ormesby.
51. Referrals to Social Care (statutory interventions) are also made via the MACH by professionals working with children or by families. In instances where the family is new to Social Care and does not already have a Social Worker, they are assessed by the Assessment Service. Where it is identified that further work is needed the family is transferred to the Safeguarding and Care Planning Service. At this point, when case allocations are made, where the child/family live in Newport or North Ormesby, they will be allocated to a Social Worker assigned to those localities.
52. There are instances, however, where children from Newport or North Ormesby are allocated to Social Workers who are not assigned to the localities in order to avoid children having changes in Social Worker. As children's cases progress, there will be an eventual move towards stronger consistency of Social Workers within the locality model.
53. To improve consistency and alleviate pressures with case allocations and throughput, a single Social Work Team was established in November 2021. The dedicated team consists of a Team Manager and six Social Workers – five dedicated to working across both the Newport and North Ormesby localities and a sixth Social Worker for additional capacity when and if needed. It is now a priority to allocate Newport and North Ormesby families to this team.

Caseloads

54. All Social Workers within the statutory Social Care teams across the town are allocated no more than 25 children each. At the time the information was provided to the Panel (November 2021), some locality Social Workers continued to work with families outside of the localities, and some non-locality workers continued to work with families in the localities, therefore, it was not possible to provide a true breakdown of caseloads for social workers within the localities at this stage.

Benefits

55. Early Help and Social Care staff work closely together within the localities, and across Middlesbrough, to ensure that any 'step up' or 'step down' of services is seamless. Staff generally feel locality working is a positive step with real benefits, such as:-
 - Joint visits with other professionals working in the same area
 - Families in the respective localities recognising staff when they are in the locality
 - Greater knowledge of the community and partners particularly with neighbourhood wardens and housing colleagues
 - Improved relationships with schools in the localities as practitioners are working with children attending the same few schools and can therefore build up stronger relationships
 - More effective use of professional time
 - A reduction in mileage
56. In terms of feedback from staff and service users, a quote provided from a Senior Early Help Practitioner in relation to their views on locality working, states:

- *“I do really think the concept works, or if I put it another way I really would not want to go back to Town Wide working.”*

From families receiving support:

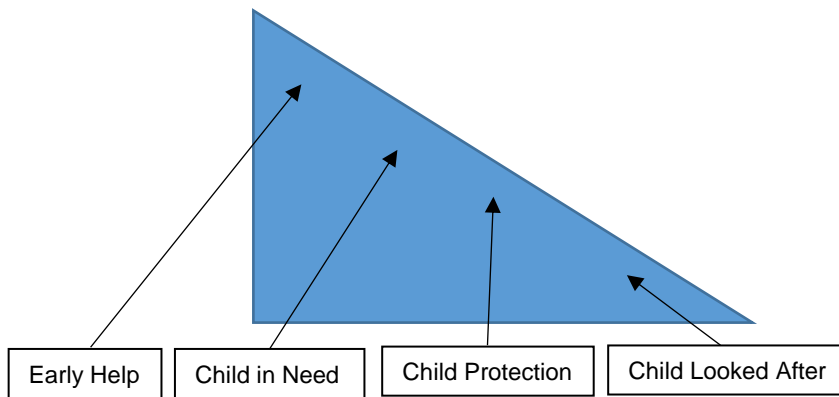
- *“It brought A out of himself and he is doing a lot better than he was, she was really nice to talk to.”*
- *“The support has been well received and everything is going well.”*
- *“This time last year I was so depressed, now I am working and have a nice house, I don’t struggle to get out of bed anymore.”*

What’s Not Working so Well?

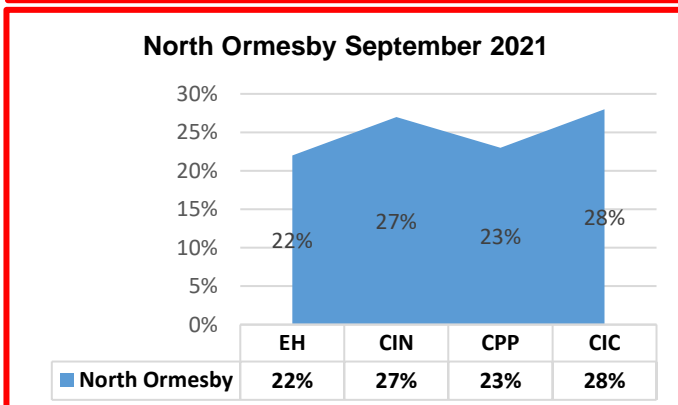
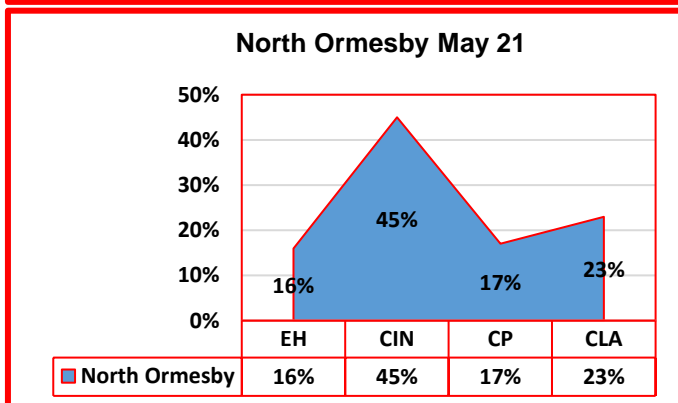
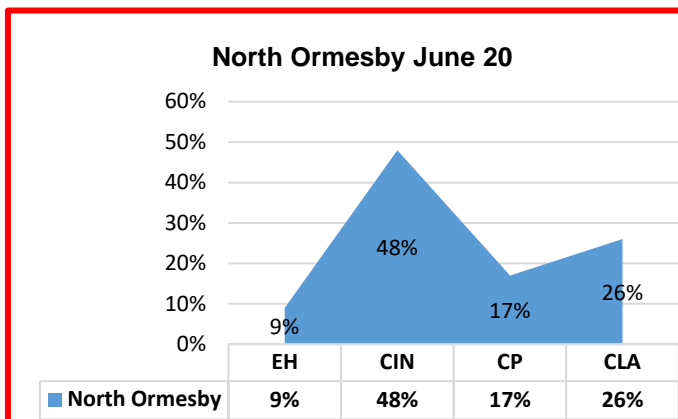
- 57. The impact of Covid and subsequent virtual working has made it more difficult to build working relationships between some partners, however, this is starting to improve now that there is a gradual return to a mix of office-based and virtual working arrangements.
- 58. Whilst Early Help services are operating successfully across Middlesbrough, staff feel that there are not sufficient numbers of Early Help Practitioners assigned to the two localities.
- 59. In general, there appears to be a lack of awareness of the pilot programmes with some services and partners.

Impact so far

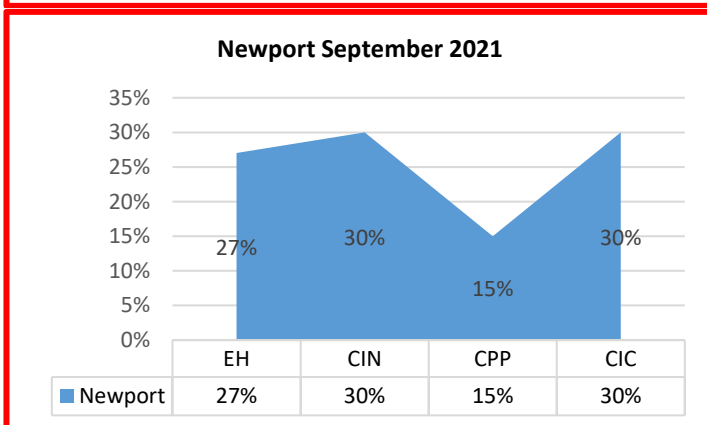
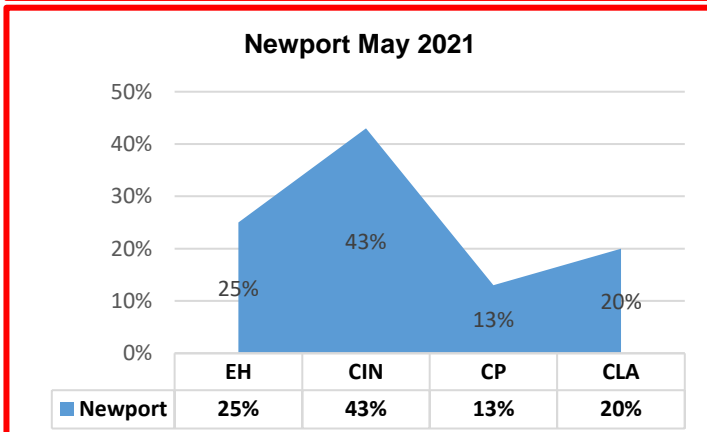
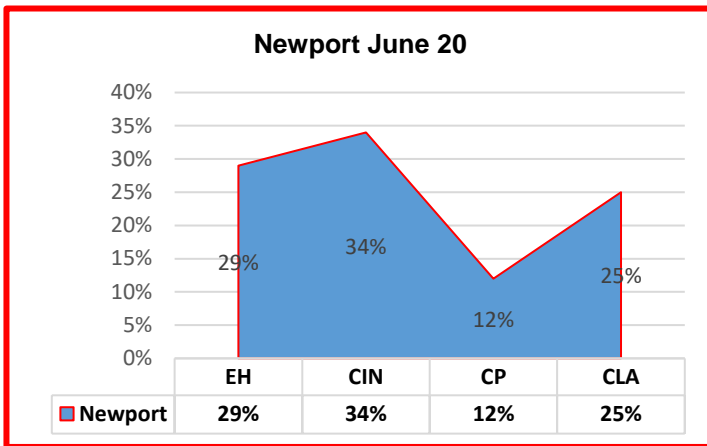
- 60. The Panel heard that the ‘ideal shape’ of service provision for Children’s Social Care was to have the highest levels of provision in early help, meaning more children and families were being helped at an earlier stage with less statutory intervention being required. This was followed by support provision for children in need, child protection and finally children looked after – where the aim is to have the lowest number possible.



- 61. From the graphs below, it can be seen that in North Ormesby, in June 2020, there was little Early Help activity (9%); a high number of children in need (48%); less child protection cases (17%) but higher numbers of children looked after (26%). By May 2021, it can be seen that Early Help activity increased to 16%, however, children in need (45%) and children looked after (23%) remained high. By September 2021, Early Help had significantly increased (22%), children in need reduced to 27% and child protection work increased to 23%. The number of children looked after remains high (28%), however, it shows positive progress in that more Early Help work is happening in North Ormesby.



62. Data in respect of Newport shows that in June 2020 levels of Early Help were already quite high at 29%, this reduced slightly in May 2021 (25%) but increased slightly by September 2021 to 27%, therefore, Early Help provision appears stable. Numbers of children in need remain quite high and the numbers of children looked after increased from 25% in June 2020 to 30% in September 2021. From the data, it would appear that locality working in Newport may not be working quite as successfully as in North Ormesby in terms of children's social care.



Partner Services and Organisations

63. As part of its review, over the course of several meetings, the Panel invited a number of representatives from a range of Council services and partner organisations to discuss their involvement in the locality working pilots in order to provide a better understanding of how a multi-agency approach is working to improve outcomes for children and families.

64. The following partners attended:-

- Early Help
- Children’s Social Care
- Public Health South Tees
- Selective Landlord Licensing/Public Protection

- Newport Primary School
- Newport Neighbourhood Police
- Youth Focus North East
- Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland
- North Ormesby Primary Academy
- North Ormesby Neighbourhood Police
- Children's Centre
- Community Safety/Street Wardens

65. Each of the represented partners was asked to provide information in relation to their service/organisation and explain their understanding of the locality working pilots; how their service/organisation works within the pilots and how they are working with partners to achieve better outcomes for children and families in the localities. A summary is provided below.

Selective Landlord Licensing/Public Protection

66. Selective Licensing is a scheme which aims to improve the standards of property management in the private rental housing sector. All private landlords operating within a designated Selective Landlord Licensing area are required to obtain a license from the Council for each property which is rented out. The conditions of the license ensure that the property is managed effectively, and license holders must demonstrate their compliance.
67. The Selective Landlord Licensing scheme currently runs in North Ormesby and part of Newport ward, to help improve standards of accommodation, and social and economic conditions. Evidence shows that significant and ongoing anti-social behaviour coupled with low demand for housing are linked to the private rental sector in North Ormesby and Newport.
68. The Selective Landlord Licensing Team sits within the Council's Public Protection Service. The wider Public Protection Service has always worked in an integrated way with Children's Services across the whole of Middlesbrough, however, locality working affords greater opportunities and a framework for such work to be carried out more collaboratively. This includes Trading Standards who deal with age-restricted products including alcohol and cigarette sales which can impact adversely on young people.
69. More specifically, the Selective Landlord Licensing Team works closely with Early Help services, for example, Early Help may be working with a family living in a property in state of poor disrepair. This would be brought to the attention of the Selective Landlord Licensing Team and a joint visit would be undertaken, often including officers from Environmental Health, to inspect the property and assess whether it met an acceptable living standard.
70. When inspection or post-tenancy visits are undertaken, a checklist is used to ascertain whether the family is working with any other services and asked whether they feel they require help/support from any other services.
71. The Selective Landlord Licensing Team attend child protection meetings which feed into support plans for children and families and regularly liaise with Social Workers to discuss whether families meet thresholds for Early Help support or safeguarding concerns in order to make referrals where appropriate. Whilst carrying out housing inspections, any concerns are raised with Early Help or Social Care teams where appropriate.
72. The Team also works in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Safety Team in relation to anti-social behaviour issues, including preparing anti-social behaviour contracts, and they liaise with Social

Workers, where applicable. In instances where a child/young person is committing anti-social behaviour, a referral will be made.

73. With the aim of tackling anti-social behaviour in both localities, the Neighbourhood Safety Officer has established a fortnightly meeting with any Social Workers allocated to the young people involved to discuss ways forward and solutions.
74. The Selective Landlord Licensing Team can see the value of locality work and feels that the pilot projects are making good progress despite being hampered somewhat due to the Covid pandemic. *“There are real benefits in being located alongside partners to resolve issues more quickly”.*

Public Health

75. Public Health works with partners and local communities across Middlesbrough and beyond to promote, prevent and protect the health and well-being of local residents, of all ages with a particular focus on vulnerable people.
76. It works collaboratively to reduce mortality and morbidity from preventable causes by addressing lifestyle risk factors and is responsible for commissioning a variety of services such as sexual health services, drug and alcohol services, stop smoking services, school nursing and health visiting services. In addition, the service works with partners to address mental health and emotional wellbeing; obesity and nutrition; physical inactivity; workplace health; aging well; and diabetes and cardiovascular disease prevention.
77. The ‘Live Well Centre’, located in Dundas Arcade, Middlesbrough, is an integrated health and wellbeing hub, bringing together a range of externally contracted and internally delivered wellbeing services to holistically tackle some of the leading causes of health inequalities in Middlesbrough and support town-wide social regeneration.
78. Public Health has been involved in the locality working projects since inception, with two dedicated members of staff attached to the pilot projects – one in Newport and one in North Ormesby.
79. Public Health operates within the locality teams in its widest sense – to develop community engagement links; to ensure all services working within the locality teams are aware that they can approach public health with any concerns regarding health and wellbeing within the localities; signposting - directing people to services such as drug and alcohol services; helping with mental health and wellbeing.
80. In terms of the wider aspects of the project, Public Health staff regularly take part in community walkabouts and litter picks and make themselves known to local street wardens and residents to raise awareness about how they can help to improve health and wellbeing for families.
81. In terms of Public Health’s involvement in the Children’s Social Care agenda, within Newport, work has been undertaken in relation to improving the school environment, working with Middlesbrough Environment City, signposting regarding poverty and provision of quarterly data on child development and breast feeding rates in the area. Public Health wants to promote pro-active working with all other services and agencies to improve outcomes for people living in the area.
82. The Public Health Team considers that in some ways Covid has helped to raise its profile and the wide range of services it offers by showing that services can work differently to address people’s needs. Indeed, different ways of working forced by the pandemic have been more effective than ever considered possible.

83. Public Health is always keen to join any new approaches where there is real co-ordination and partnership working as this is essential to supporting families. It is acknowledged that some partners working within the localities are not fully aware of the wide breadth of services offered through Public Health and this requires further promotion. The pandemic has hampered achieving some of the aims set out by locality working – particularly where cross-office conversations may be beneficial in order to build relationships - and it is hoped this will be regained in the near future when safe to do so.
84. Public Health is supportive of a multi-agency approach on a wider scale in the future and feels this is the best way to address all of the issues that can affect an individual's health and wellbeing.
85. In many ways, the vision is that locality working hubs will operate in a similar vein to the principle of the Live Well Centre – where an individual with multiple needs can attend the centre and engage with a 'Motivator' who will address all of their needs, either directly or by engaging them with the appropriate services, such as drug and alcohol services, welfare rights, sexual health, mental health resources, etc. The locality working hubs offer similar opportunities to link into already funded services, whether that be a Council service, a Voluntary or Community Service or a national organisation. The key is to work better with the services that already exist and to build on the 'making every contact count' approach to make it the strength behind locality working.
86. From a Public Health perspective, improvements in outcomes in both localities are being recognised.

Newport Primary School

87. Newport Primary School is located within Newport ward. Whilst the school is not a driver of the locality working project it does work with services that support its children and families and their delivery model has changed as a result of the locality working pilot.
88. The areas where locality working has impacted most positively on the school include Early Help and Neighbourhood Safety.
89. In terms of Early Help, a Senior Practitioner is allocated to Newport and this has been very positive for the school, allowing positive relationships to be forged with school staff, children and families.
90. The Practitioner regularly attends the school to meet children and families and works with a range of agencies to help address multi-faceted issues and problems that families may be experiencing. For example, families may have problems with inadequate housing or difficulties with neighbours, which can impact children within the household. The Practitioner is knowledgeable about which agencies to contact to provide support to the family.
91. In relation to caseloads, due to the large numbers of families requiring support from the Early Help Practitioner, it is not possible for her to carry all of the caseloads alone. Whilst the Practitioner supports the majority of families with children attending the school, some cases have to be allocated to other practitioners, but even then the school is complimentary of the professional approach and attitude of all Early Help Practitioners.
92. The Panel also heard that the Neighbourhood Safety Team has made a significant difference to families within the school. It is often the case that many issues faced by families lay outside of the education framework but still impact on children. For example, poor housing conditions, noisy neighbours, children not sleeping, etc. The school is now able to contact the Neighbourhood Manager or one of the locality team to report the issues and will be quickly signposted to the correct services for support. This saves time for school staff and ensures families are helped in the best way possible.

Newport Neighbourhood Policing Team

93. The Newport Neighbourhood Policing Team works alongside the Locality hub in Newport, linking with various services across a range of issues, including regular multi-agency days and weeks of action. The Panel heard that services are working much more closely than they had in the past and that this is continuing to strengthen.
94. Regular Neighbourhood Safety drop-in sessions are held at Newport Community Hub and Streets Ahead for Information where residents are able to speak to officers from Neighbourhood Safety and Cleveland Police, in confidence, to report issues or to seek advice and support.
95. A programme of work with young people in the area is underway and a dedicated PCSO engages specifically with young people at Newport Hub in a range of activities including the Middlesbrough Foundation kick about. The dedicated PCSO is well-known and respected within the community which is helping to build relationships between young people in the area and the neighbourhood policing team.
96. Some of the barriers to building relationships include language and cultural barriers, however, these are beginning to be broken down.
97. The Newport Neighbourhood Policing Team feels that the multi-agency approach is beginning to work and progress is being made. It provides an opportunity for the Police to link to a range of services through the Newport Neighbourhood Manager and the locality team which assists greatly with tackling crime in the area. The most recent crime figures for Newport show a reduction – partly attributable to successful joint operations between the Police and the Council to close down problem houses/tenants. Once more serious crime reduces, there is increased opportunity for lower level issues to be dealt with.
98. The neighbourhood police regularly attend Newport Primary School to chat with parents and children at drop off and pick up times and consider that working with children from a young age helps to build relationships.

Youth Focus North East

99. Youth Focus North East (YFNE) is a young people's charity covering the north east, particularly East Middlesbrough, including North Ormesby. YFNE is currently funded through the Big Local lotto-funded initiative and is approximately half way through a 10-year funded period.
100. Youth provision is delivered in areas where none, or very little, exists. Young people in the area are initially consulted with to discover their aspirations and to encourage and instil that they are capable of achieving amazing things.
101. Youth provision is delivered on Mondays and Thursdays at North Ormesby Hub, Derwent Street, for young people aged 10 – 18 years and includes activities such as cooking healthy meals from scratch that they can take home and share with their families; arts-based activities, sports and, where appropriate, intervention-based work such as substance misuse and sexual health.
102. YFNE participate in the weekly North Ormesby locality team meetings which are key to enabling young people's voices to be heard and to help take forward their ideas to improve their community. For example, YFNE is funded to create social action projects, focussing on ideas that will benefit the community and make it a nicer place to live.

103. YFNE is working with the North Ormesby Locality Team in order to implement some of those ideas – such as recent community litter picks undertaken by young people and an art project where young people had created decorative boards to cover void property frontages within North Ormesby to improve their appearance. This work was undertaken in conjunction with the Council and Thirteen Housing. In addition, in conjunction with the Locality Team, a Community Awards event was organised to celebrate people within the community and a similar event was also held in Newport.
104. YFNE has excellent engagement with the local community, with many of its staff living within the locality, and has found it beneficial to work with other organisations to strive for shared aims and objectives on a larger scale.
105. YFNE is funded from external sources and is not directly funded by the Council which can sometimes result in the organisation being left out of the loop in terms of information sharing. For example, where other services are involved with young people and families in the community, YFNE are not always made aware of this involvement at the start despite the fact that they may already be engaging with those young people on a twice weekly basis. Issues being experienced by the individual might have been resolved more quickly had the information from other services been brought to the attention of YFNE much earlier, allowing collaborative working and less duplication.
106. YFNE attend some of the Children's Social Care locality meetings and have found this very beneficial as it provides an opportunity to share issues or concerns regarding young people they are engaging with, allowing liaison with the young person's social worker in order to determine whether any additional support could be provided to that young person by YFNE. This also helps to avoid duplication of provision.
107. In general, YFNE considers the locality working pilot in North Ormesby to be working well with good oversight provided by the North Ormesby Neighbourhood Manager and that the team focusing on the North Ormesby area is doing the best they can to achieve positive outcomes for the community.

Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland

108. Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland (TM&C) was launched by the Archbishop of York in December 2012 as an expression of the Church Urban Fund (CUF) in the Diocese of York. Its work is shaped by local people, churches and organisations to help strengthen communities.
109. TM&C aims to address a range of social issues and its key areas of work are: children and families, loneliness and isolation, homelessness, mental health and wellbeing, food insecurity and asylum seekers.
110. As one of the partners involved in the locality working pilot projects, TM&C representatives attend both locality meetings in Newport and North Ormesby on a weekly basis. This provides an excellent opportunity to inform other partners of TM&C's activities and to be kept informed of all activities delivered by partners in the localities.
111. One of TM&C's key initiatives in relation to supporting children and families is the 'Feast of Fun'. TM&C is responsible for co-ordinating the Feast of Fun programme of fun activities and provision of healthy meals across Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland during school holiday periods. The aim of the project is to combat hunger during school holidays for vulnerable families who struggle to provide the cost of additional meals and entertainment for children outside of term time.
112. Funding for Feast of Fun provision is raised from external sources by TM&C each year. In turn TM&C supports around 40 churches and community organisations in order to deliver Feast of Fun within their own communities via small grants.

113. Whilst it is becoming increasingly difficult to access funding streams, one of the Feast of Fun's largest funding partners - Break, Meals and More – works closely with TM&C on an annual basis to ensure that the amount of funding available across Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland is identified at the start of each year.
114. Additional resources are also secured for other organisations that TM&C works with, such as Feast of Fun branding in order for organisations/groups to promote their activities in the community and co-ordinating and disseminating additional resources for groups to access, such as coach hire, free entry to tourist attractions, children's books, workshop providers, entertainers and healthy food ingredients. Some of the organisations TM&C works in partnership with include:-
- Newport Hub
 - Streets Ahead for Information
 - Youth Focus North East
 - Linx
 - Trinity Young People and Children's Project
 - Local Schools
115. The Locality Team meetings, as referenced earlier, provide TM&C with the opportunity to share information in relation to Feast of Fun delivery periods, which organisations may wish to be involved in and identifying possible funding streams.
116. Locality Working facilitates discussion around specific families that may be in desperate need of support during the holidays. Families requiring support are identified by schools, or an organisation working with a school or organisation working with TM&C. They can apply to TM&C for funding in order to support those families. Locality Working allows all of the agencies to liaise with each other in order to identify the right support and requirements for the family so that they receive the most appropriate support.
117. In terms of impact, during 2019, the organisations that participated in Feast of Fun, delivered **13,000** meals to children at a cost of **£34,000**. During 2020, Feast of Fun became Feast of Fun at Home due to the pandemic and **86,000** meals were delivered, costing around **£82,000**. During 2021, the provision was delivered both remotely and face to face and the number of meals delivered again increased to **117,000**, requiring funding in the region of **£117,000**. Alongside those meals, organisations delivered activity packs during periods of lockdown.
118. During 2021 in Newport and North Ormesby, through the Feast of Fun, **1,292** children and young people were supported; **398** adults were supported and **10,441** meals were provided, as well as enrichment activities.
119. The Panel heard that in 2021 the Holiday Activities Fund (HAF) was introduced and funded by the Council. The HAF provision is very similar to Feast of Fun, however, it is only available to children in receipt of free school meals within school during one week of each of the Christmas and Easter holidays and for four weeks during the summer holidays. This differs from the Feast of Fun provision which is available during all school holiday periods throughout the year and can support any family, which is beneficial as many families are on the borderline of receiving support. This places additional demand on Feast of Fun provision when it is delivered at times when HAF provision is not delivered. It is, therefore, crucial for planning and co-ordination of HAF and Feast of Fun delivery to take place when they are running in parallel to avoid duplication and ensure every young person has access to provision where needed.
120. Here are some examples of the feedback provided by families who have accessed Feast of Fun provision highlighting how valuable the support is for them and the impact it has:-

- *“I was in tears when I knew I had a pack coming its made a huge difference.”*
- *“This year on furlough has been hard, there is just so much stress trying to cover everything I need and not knowing how to get through the holidays. We don’t qualify for support but our outgoings are the same as they were on full pay.”*
- *“I was made redundant and just didn’t know how I was going to get through the school holidays.”*
- *“We lost income, but being self-employed there is nothing much we can claim, thanks for helping out.”*
- *“The whole area is just buzzing, a real feel good feeling of kids and families getting outside and having a great day.”*

North Ormesby Primary Academy

121. North Ormesby Primary Academy currently has 278 children on roll, with approximately 20% of those children receiving level four Children’s Services (children subject to statutory Social Work intervention due to acute/severe needs)¹² as well as many more children engaging at levels two (children with additional needs requiring Early Help support from one agency) and three (children with complex needs requiring Early Help support from multiple agencies).
122. The Panel was disappointed to learn from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, North Ormesby Primary Academy, that, whilst she was aware of some fantastic work going on within North Ormesby, she had not had any involvement in the Locality Working pilot and had not been invited to attend any of the locality area meetings. This has resulted in a lack of awareness of the range of services/organisations that families within the school community could be referred to for help.
123. This issue was rectified immediately following the Panel’s meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and contact details were exchanged to ensure that the school is fully aware of, and involved in, the locality working team, ongoing work in the area and an opportunity to attend appropriate multi-agency meetings within North Ormesby.
124. The Panel heard that the Holiday Activity Fund was delivered from the school during the Christmas holidays but this had been the first time that children at the school were able to access this provision. It was stated that the provision had been primarily for children in receipt of free school meals and those able to pay to attend. There is a large proportion of the community who are not able to access public funds or claim free school meals but lived on low incomes and would welcome such provision.

North Ormesby Neighbourhood Policing Team

125. North Ormesby Neighbourhood Policing Team, works alongside the Locality Team in North Ormesby.
126. In broad terms, the Neighbourhood Policing model operates across Middlesbrough on a similar basis to the locality working teams. In North Ormesby, the Locality Working Team and Neighbourhood Police Team complement each other and working relationships are enhanced by locality working.
127. The Panel heard a recent success story of how a multi-agency approach has had a positive impact on reducing anti-social behaviour in North Ormesby.

¹² Defined by the South Tees Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Interim Threshold of Need Document, Mar 2020.

128. Between June and August 2021, North Ormesby witnessed a spike in incidents of anti-social behaviour - a rise from approximately 35 per month to 50 incidents per month. This increase was due to a particular group of youths causing anti-social behaviour, disorder and criminal damage. The response through the Locality Team, predominantly working in conjunction with Selective Landlord Licensing and Neighbourhood Safety Officers, enabled greater information sharing and action, demonstrating a joint approach.
129. Police and Council Officers jointly issued anti-social behaviour contracts and warnings to perpetrators, highlighting that Police, PCSOs and Street Wardens are communicating and working together, presenting as a united team. The Council had led on the Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts which enabled Police to concentrate on pursuing the offenders for crime, leading to prosecutions and ultimately banning the ring-leader of the group from North Ormesby. This resulted in anti-social behaviour incidents reducing from a peak of 50 events in June/July/August 2021, to single figures by January 2022.
130. Of the residents that the Police engage with, feedback has been very positive, including parents of youths that had engaged in lower level anti-social behaviour, who commented that the area was a much nicer place to live. This is as a result of the action being taken through working within the locality model approach.
131. As part of the locality working approach, young people who had been involved in low level anti-social behaviour are invited to attend a presentation by youth workers to discourage them from engaging in such behaviours and to highlight the impact of their behaviour on others. This initiative is carried out in conjunction with the youth offending service. As part of the prevention work in the area, the 'mini police' programme in primary schools allows Police Officers work with the schools to identify the children that would benefit most from taking part.
132. In addition, the Council has commissioned youth work at both universal and targeted levels with Linx, The Junction and Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation. The Youth Offending Service now has a preventative arm and is becoming more involved in prevention work around anti-social behaviour.
133. The Panel heard that, when dealing with anti-social behaviour, improvements have been made in identifying vulnerability and linking in with Social Services. Issues are flagged between all partners, for example, to look at why a child might be behaving in that way, were there issues at home?
134. Protecting young people from drugs is also a priority and identifying the potential of being vulnerable to criminal exploitation. This is an area where the Police have made improvements in the last 3-5 years.
135. In broader terms, the Police has a successful working relationship with the Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH) (front door to Children's Services) with good information sharing processes in place. A profile compiled by the Police covering the Cleveland Police area identifies Organised Crime Groups and Anti-Social Behaviour groups which is a useful tool when multi-agency meetings are held to discuss young people who are at significant risk of exploitation.
136. The Police are leaders of the 'making people feel safe' Action Plan. Anti-social behaviour plays a big part in feeling unsafe, as did drugs. Mirroring the locality team, regular Multi Agency Response to Serious and Organised Crime (MARSOC) meetings are held to discuss intelligence and actions and how each of the partners can contribute to tackling serious and organised crime.
137. In addition, Police School Liaison Officers attended both primary schools in North Ormesby to deliver a six-week programme called 'Mini Police'. This includes various activities, culminating in delivering

an assembly to the whole school reinforcing messages around responsibility and not taking part in anti-social behaviour. The programme provides a good opportunity for children to be introduced to the Neighbourhood Policing Team in order to build good relationships.

138. The Neighbourhood Policing Team has experienced some challenges over the last 18 months, including the impact of Covid and extensive challenges with staffing cuts, however, officer numbers are slowly beginning to increase. There are a high proportion of probationary officers coming through but they need to be supported.
139. The Panel heard that the North Ormesby Neighbourhood Policing Team had also experienced challenges during the summer – tying in with the peak of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage issues in North Ormesby – when officers had often been deployed elsewhere. However, those officers were now returning to the team and figures for anti-social behaviour and crime were relatively low. Whilst there are areas of Middlesbrough with higher demand, it is essential for Officers to remain on duty in North Ormesby in order to build relationships in the community and to continue the positive work in the area, including prevention work.
140. Neighbourhood Policing aims to reduce and prevent crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour by use of targeted patrols; community engagement and problem solving. On a local level, the Policing Team's presence in North Ormesby needs to be highly visible to have a high impact.
141. The North Ormesby Neighbourhood Policing Team feel that there are fantastic working relationships with all partners in the locality team, particularly Selective Landlord Licensing, Street Wardens and Neighbourhood Support Officers. Personal working relationships are strong and good results are being achieved and built on.

Children's Centre/School Readiness

142. The School Readiness team works with families with children aged (pre-birth) 0 – 5 years. They link with midwifery, health and other partners to ensure that expectant parents, parents/carers and children get the best support possible to improve a child's life opportunities and outcomes.
143. The Team helps to prepare children to be ready for nursery and primary school via a number of means, including Children's Centre universal activities such as baby play, stay and play, healthy child clinic's and parenting workshops. It also offers advice to all families working with Early Help services on how best to support their child/children's development through the key early year's stages.
144. Support is available to parents/carers to access good quality childcare, including free early education for two, three and four year olds (achieving two year olds, nursery education grant and 30 hour entitlement).
145. The Children's Centres offer all families (with children aged under five years) a range of services, information and support within their local community. The main aim of Children's Centres is to improve outcomes for all young children, by encouraging them to learn and advising parents how they can support this at home.
146. Once parents/carers register with the Centres they can be signposted to information, advice and guidance. Registered families become part of the Children's Centre's universal provision, including eligibility advice around free education for two, three and four year olds, healthy vitamins programme and 'best start' pathway (for 0-2 year olds).

147. Targeted interventions are delivered to identified families, for example, Chat, Play, Read, Sing is a literacy support programme, also Play and Learn Together (when children had completed their two-year-old health review) delivers key messages around supporting good home learning and reinforcing that family members are key educators.
148. Regular monitoring and follow-up is carried out with families to ensure they are aware of the services available to them and to advise them in relation to eligibility for free child care and also helping them to identify and access childcare settings.
149. The Children's Centres work in partnership with the locality teams in both Newport and North Ormesby and considers the impact of locality working on school readiness predominantly relates to better information sharing to ensure families are aware of available provision and how to access it, as well as providing good networking opportunities to raise awareness of local issues and to break down cultural barriers within the community.
150. The Panel heard that examples of working in a locality-minded way included working with colleagues from other services such as Selective Landlord Licensing and Neighbourhood Safety Teams and when colleagues have their own agenda for visiting families, wherever possible, the Children's Centres liaise with those colleagues to ensure opportunities are not missed to identify under-fives who may not be registered with the Children's Centre in order to ensure families did not miss out on information advice and guidance and to encourage and help families to understand the benefits of their children accessing education from a young age.
151. Children's Centres also work closely with Health Visiting colleagues and have shared pathways. Statutory contacts are actively followed up to focus on the learning and development of the child and supporting the parents in doing this.
152. During the Covid pandemic, the Children's Centres continued to offer an increased amount of support within Newport and North Ormesby. The Children's Centre covering Newport is physically based at Whinney Banks, West Middlesbrough. Pre-covid there were many activities taking place in the Centre but it was difficult for some families to get there. Since Covid the majority of provision is delivered digitally and families are being contacted by telephone, WhatsApp and other platforms to increase accessibility and this is was working well.
153. In terms of impact, reach data for Children's Centres that families from North Ormesby and Newport access is as follows:-

CHILDREN'S CENTRE	TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES REACHED		TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTACTS	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
North Ormesby	181	245	5,700	5,983
West Middlesbrough	628	878	3,335	3,345
Abingdon	462	758	5,464	10,493

154. This data shows a significant increase in the number of families reached from 2020 to 2021 across all three children's centres.

155. In relation to the take up of nursery places, settings that offer funded childcare to two, three and four year olds (universal and extended provision), is shown below (as at Autumn term 2021):-

North Ormesby ward

SETTING	A2YO	UNIVERSAL 3&4 YRS	EXTENDED 3&4 YRS
Dimples	45	21	9
The Pavillion	4	4	0
St. Pius School	0	1	0
*Minnows	32	7	0
*Top Corner	13	14	3
*School House	4	10	6

*These figures may include children attending who live outside of North Ormesby ward.

Newport ward

SETTING	A2YO	UNIVERSAL 3&4 YRS	EXTENDED 3&4 YRS
Ayresome School	29	0	0
*Archibald School	27	0	0
*Great Expectations	21	15	3
*Little Treasures	4	6	0
*Teacher Time Linthorpe	40	44	3
*Zizus	5	5	2

* These figures may include children attending who live outside of Newport ward.

156. Schools also offer universal 15 hours provision, increasing to 30 hours for eligible families of three and four year olds, but this data is not available.
157. The key challenges in terms of school readiness include cultural barriers, for example, for some families it is not the cultural 'norm' to use childcare for two year olds. Both localities also have high numbers of transient families. However, locality working, enables networking with colleagues who, in turn, are supporting information sharing regarding the Children's Centres and assisting with families whose first language is not English in order to raise awareness about the services available to them and potential eligibility for nursery places.

Neighbourhood Safety/Street Wardens

158. The Neighbourhood Safety Team works with partners and local people across Middlesbrough, as well as the two locality teams, to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour including vandalism, graffiti, deliberate damage to property or vehicles, groups of teenagers hanging around on the streets, fly tipping/littering, drug dealing/use, drunk or rowdy behaviour and chaotic families.
159. Attached to the Neighbourhood Safety Team, Street Wardens work within the locality model to support partners and colleagues, including colleagues in Children's Services.
160. Street Wardens have assisted with colleagues by carrying out 'door knocking', this included supporting the work of the Children's Centres.
161. As a whole, the Neighbourhood Safety Team, has an excellent relationship with Children's Services and works closely with them right across the town, however, this is enhanced by locality working.
162. Street Wardens regularly support partners with intelligence gathering within the community and are the eyes and ears on the ground, gaining information/intelligence which other services are not otherwise privy to.
163. Street Wardens assist Children's Services and Police to trace vulnerable/at risk young people who go missing. Daily Police briefings are held within the localities to discuss all incidents that had occurred within the last 24 hours, including vulnerable young people considered to be at risk of harm who go missing on a regular basis. Key information is distributed amongst the Street Wardens

together with photographs which allow the Wardens to gather information on contacts and properties visited by those young people and to report back to appropriate partners. This flags up risks with partners so that appropriate actions and interventions can be put in place.

164. In addition, Street Wardens regularly attend joint home visits with Children's Services and Neighbourhood Safety Officers to provide protection to staff and to develop relationships with young people and families to help keep them safe in the community.
165. The Street Wardens regularly attend organised youth groups across Middlesbrough but particularly in Newport and North Ormesby where there has been a great deal of targeted outreach work to help divert young people away from crime and disorder.
166. Wardens use the locality hubs on a daily basis whilst on operational patrol and are able to feed information and intelligence directly to partners in real-time and can act on task directions from partners in response to this. Locality working helps to speed up responses to the community's needs.
167. Street Wardens are also involved in a range of projects developed through the locality teams such as litter picks, back alley makeovers, weeks of action in relation to organised crime and drug activity whereby information is passed to Police for action.
168. From a community safety perspective, locality working has had a significant impact in both localities and has enhanced relationships by bringing together operational staff on a regular basis for key information sharing and development of action plans. This allows a more targeted and focussed service to be delivered in the community.

Next Steps

169. The Panel heard that the locality pilot projects will be evaluated using various methods including community surveys, data analysis and case studies.
170. An evaluation report of the pilots is being prepared and it is anticipated that it will be submitted to the Executive in June 2022 for consideration.
171. Outcomes and learning from the two pilot projects will inform whether the operating model should continue in Newport and North Ormesby and whether the programme should be rolled out to other areas of the town in some way.

TERM OF REFERENCE C - To identify best practice from other local authorities where locality working for Children's Services is working well.

172. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the placed based partnership approach (or locality working as it has become known in Middlesbrough), seeks to achieve a joined up system change, centring on recognising the need to reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations, voluntary sector, the private sector, including businesses and residents in order to achieve change by developing collaborative approaches to address the underlying causes of community problems.
173. Part of the purpose of place based approaches is to build capacity within the community in order for residents to take charge of their own futures, to have a strong voice and to build social capital and connections within the community.
174. Several local authorities have sought to redefine relationships with their residents in different ways with focus on varying priorities.
175. Research undertaken by Think Local, Act Personal (Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCiE))¹³ looks at the evolving model of asset-based approaches and provides good practice examples where Councils and other organisations are taking practical steps to shift in the direction of an asset-based area.
176. An asset based approach firstly looks for the strengths, capabilities, resources and creativity within community and aims to co-produce all of an area's plans and services to address the needs and challenges of the community. Public sector bodies and their partners, volunteers and potential service users need to meet as equals to identify what is needed, and what the shared goals are for the area, and the best ways to achieve them together.
177. Three key components to achieving a whole system change are identified as:-
- Co-production, partnership and power sharing
 - Diversifying workforces and building local enterprise
 - A strategic approach to being asset-based.
178. There are several examples of local areas putting asset based actions into practice, all of which differ in form and scope but demonstrate imagination and commitment to make better places for and with people. These include:-
- City of York Council
179. The City of York Council has been using the original version of the asset-based area framework over several years to re-write relationships between the Council, citizens and the community. The Council's Head of Commissioning states : "*it has acted as a catalyst for change, creating conditions for success, informed by shared values and stories of impact.*"
- Camden Council
180. The 'Camden Mile' (pre-pandemic), encouraged Council staff to regularly go out into the local area to talk to local people, organisations and businesses with a view to finding community assets where they may not have looked before. Taking a wider view of what counts as an asset can reveal abundance where state resources are scarce and over-stretched.

¹³ 'Think Local, Act Personal' SCiE – 'Ten Actions for an Asset Based Area' December 2021, by Alex Fox OBE.

181. With loneliness reaching epidemic proportions for older people, and growing amongst all age groups, affordable housing for younger people is scarce.
182. Homeshare programmes take these two groups of people with problems and brings them together to provide solutions.
183. After careful vetting, recruitment and preparation, an older person looking for companionship and low-level practical help is matched with a younger person seeking somewhere affordable to live who provides them with help rather than rent. They provide companionship and learn from one another.

Leeds City Council

184. Leeds City Council has committed to working together with people to find out what they want to achieve and the best way to do this is by building on their own strengths, as well as the strengths of their family, friends and local community. The aim is to enable people to achieve their goals, reach their potential and reduce reliance upon traditional services. Social workers will build relationships directly with people replacing a traditional care management approach.
185. A lengthy assessment has been reduced to a two page conversational record helping drive change from 'What's Wrong?' to 'What's Strong', through conversations about what matters to people rather than what matters to organisations. The 'front doors' that the Council offers people are organised around 13 Neighbourhood Teams. These 'Talking points' are organised to have a useful conversation quickly at a local hub then acting on them.
186. Shared Lives is one of the schemes in operation in Leeds to address people's needs in the community. An adult or young person in need of long term support is carefully matched with an approved Shared Lives Carer for day or respite care support which can include help to prepare meals and medication or companionship and getting out and about.

Swindon Borough Council

187. Swindon Borough Council has developed a programme focusing on community groups with a local parish council at the centre. The National Development Team for Inclusion is supporting the Pinehurst Community led Support Programme to shape a 'Talking Point' programme where a social care, health or housing officer can be found at a community centre to offer advice to people in their local community space.

Kirklees Council

188. Ward Councillors at Kirklees Council have their own devolved budget which they make available to organisations and groups to support local people in their wards. The democracy services department supports councillors to manage this funding which is intended to connect democracy with community development.

Wigan Council

189. The most radical and notable example of an asset or place based approach is Wigan Council, and Middlesbrough's locality model is more closely based on this example.

190. Wigan Council developed its 'Deal for the Future', now known as 'The Wigan Deal 2030'¹⁴, in conjunction with residents, community organisations, businesses and public sector bodies over a five-year period. [The Deal 2030 \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk)
191. This ambitious plan was created following 'The Big Listening Project' – listening to 6,000, in 83 locations, sharing 10,000 ideas. Analysis of all those views and ideas resulted in **ten** key priorities for the borough:-
1. Ensure the Best Start in Life
 2. Happy, Healthy People
 3. Communities that Care for Each Other
 4. Vibrant Town Centres for All
 5. An Environment to be proud of
 6. Embracing Culture, Sport and Heritage
 7. Economic Growth that benefits everyone
 8. Confidently digital
 9. A well connected place
 10. A home for all
192. Each priority has an 'Our Part' (the borough's public sector organisations and partners) and a 'Your Part' (residents), so that 'The Deal's' principles of working together to achieve their ambitions continues and everyone knows what to do to play their part.



193. The Deal is about empowering communities, focusing on their strengths and talents and what makes them happy. It is also about delivering public services in a new way with staff that are positive, accountable and have the courage to do things differently.

¹⁴ Wigan Council – The Deal 2030 document

194. The Deal has pioneered a unique approach and has set a new course for working with people, public services, businesses and communities to make a better future for all.

CONCLUSIONS

195. Based on the evidence provided throughout the investigation, the Panel's conclusions are as follows:-
- a) The Panel feels that, despite some delays mainly due to the pandemic, the locality working pilot programmes in Newport and North Ormesby are working well and are making good progress.
 - b) It notes that the locality model has had a positive impact in both areas, including:-
 - a reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime.
 - a significant increase in the number of residents who report feeling safer, both during the day and at night.
 - an increase in the number of people who state they intend to continue living in the area for longer
 - Noticeable improvements in the physical environment.
 - c) During its review, the Panel spoke to a wide range of services and organisations involved in locality working. It appears that the concept of locality working is having a positive impact in general and more specifically on children and families living in the localities. The majority of partners feel that the multi-agency approach is beneficial and has improved working relationships and dialogue between partners and the community resulting in positive outcomes. However, the Panel found some instances where partners are less aware of the locality model and did not have full awareness of all the partners involved. For example, a mixed report from primary schools in the areas – with Newport reporting a positive impact through locality working - particularly in relation to Early Help and Neighbourhood Safety – and North Ormesby reporting a lack of awareness of the model. The Panel has since received reassurance from the Director of Children's Services that awareness of the model in North Ormesby has been improved.
 - d) Both Newport and North Ormesby have some of the highest rates in Middlesbrough for self-harm and drug and alcohol related hospital admissions and ambulance pick-ups, high levels of racially motivated crime, violent crime and anti-social behaviour. All of these issues can impact on the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families. Whilst, the Panel acknowledges that Public Health colleagues form part of the locality model and play a vital role, it feels stronger links need to be made with the Primary Care Network (particularly local GP surgeries in the areas) and acute health services such as mental health providers, midwife and health visiting services, to ensure two-way communication of information.
 - e) The Panel is encouraged to hear all of the positive work ongoing within both localities and welcomes the involvement of external voluntary and community organisations and feels that they should be kept fully informed and invited to appropriate locality meetings within the areas. All partners should ensure that the right support is available to those who need it, without duplication.
 - f) The Panel welcomes the concept of locality based working and supports its continuation within Newport and North Ormesby and is supportive of the locality working model being rolled out to other areas of the town where it is identified there is a priority need based on analysis of demand and community consultation.
 - g) There are good governance structures in place with regular operational and strategic level meetings to discuss issues and progress which are well attended by relevant representatives and actioned appropriately.

- h) A range of relevant Action Plans have been established in both localities, including for Children's Services, and these are monitored appropriately. Each Action Plan has smart targets linked to the Performance Management Framework indicators which are used to monitor impact and progress on a regular basis.
- i) The Panel recognises that the needs of each locality are, and will be, different and that this may result in involvement of various different organisations to suit the needs of each particular locality, however, it considers that all statutory partners are constant and have a vital role to play in any locality and should be fully involved in any locality working programmes.
- j) With specific regard to Children's Services, the Panel feels reassured that Social Worker capacity has been increased via the establishment of a single team of Social Workers who will be allocated cases from the two localities.
- k) Whilst Early Help Practitioners are positive about locality working and feel that the concept works, they have stated they do not feel there are sufficient numbers of Practitioners assigned to the localities to cope with demand.
- l) The Panel notes that between June 2020 and September 2021, Early Help work in North Ormesby increased significantly and this is to be welcomed as it means more families are being helped at an earlier stage - before statutory interventions are required. During the same period, Children in Need cases reduced significantly, Child Protection cases have increased slightly, as have the number of Children Looked After, but are relatively stable. In Newport, in June 2020 levels of Early Help support were quite high, reducing slightly by September 2021, showing Early Help is relatively stable in Newport. Between June 2020 and September 2021, the numbers of Children in Need remain quite high and there was a 5% increase in the numbers of children becoming looked after. Based on the information provided to the Panel, this suggests that Early Help is working well across both localities but in terms of children's social care, this appears to be working more successfully in North Ormesby.
- m) In terms of school readiness, impact data provided to the Panel shows that, through a multi-agency approach, the number of families reached has significantly increased from 2020 to 2021 across all three children's centres accessible to families within Newport and North Ormesby.

RECOMMENDATIONS

196. Based on the evidence gathered during the investigation, and the conclusions above, the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel makes the following recommendations for consideration by the Executive:-
- a) The Panel supports the continuation of Locality Working in both Newport and North Ormesby and further supports the roll-out of the model to other areas of the town based on priority need, to be determined through demand analysis, community surveys and led by the evaluation report for consideration by the Executive.
 - b) In supporting the Locality Working model in Middlesbrough, the Panel recommends that discussions with senior managers and directors of finance within all public sector partner organisations takes place with a view to appropriately and proportionately funding each locality working area to ensure sufficient staffing allocations to meet demand. The Panel would further recommend that appropriate core structures are in place within the locality teams to ensure that Neighbourhood Managers are fully supported and deputised for during periods of absence/holidays.
 - c) The Panel acknowledges the high numbers of early help cases in both Newport and North Ormesby and notes the views of the Early Help Practitioners that they feel there are not enough practitioners to meet demand. The Panel therefore recommends that, subject to further analysis, consideration be given to the number of Early Help workers allocated to each area.
 - d) The Panel notes the impact data in respect of Children's Social Care Services within the localities and that the number of children looked after remains high. The Panel acknowledges that, whilst social workers have been in place for some time in the locality areas, they have only fairly recently been moved into one team to ensure consistency of approach and management oversight. The Panel, therefore, recommends that impact continues to be monitored and reported to the Panel in six months' time.
 - e) That Early Help Practitioners and the Social Workers be introduced to appropriate staff within each of the areas' schools to build up relationships and discuss children/families requiring support through regular dialogue and that the work of the locality teams is promoted and regularly discussed with school leadership teams.
 - f) That school readiness and children's centre registrations continue to be monitored and promoted in a range of languages to maximise reach and take up of nursery places to ensure that children are ready for school to optimise their learning potential.
 - g) That relevant community and voluntary organisations, including schools, are equally involved in the locality teams and that appropriate information sharing takes place to ensure:
 - i) That access to a 'signposting directory' of all services and organisations available to support families within the localities is available to all partners via the Neighbourhood Manager/a designated co-ordinator.
 - ii) That programmes of activities and events designed to support children and families are planned, discussed and co-ordinated in advance between partners within the localities to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure those who need help and support receive it. (For example, that the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) provision is co-ordinated in conjunction with Feast of Fun activity to maximise appropriate take-up and avoid duplication).

- h) That stronger links are made, through Public Health colleagues if and where appropriate, between primary care and acute care providers including GPs, mental health provision, midwife and health visiting services with improved referral pathways to Early Help and Children's Social Care Services where appropriate.
- i) Ensure that all partners are familiar with Middlesbrough's threshold of need document when making referrals to children's social care to improve the quality of referrals and ensure that the correct level of support can be determined and provided as quickly as possible and that the document be readily accessible via the Neighbourhood Manager/designated Co-ordinator.
- j) The Panel considers that Locality Working in Middlesbrough should be better promoted and clearly branded to ensure that all partners, and the community, are aware of how it operates, who is involved and how to make contact. The Wigan Deal is a good example of this where each priority area has an 'our part' (the borough's public sector organisations and partners) and a 'your part' (residents) so that the principles of working together to achieve joint ambitions is realised with each partner aware of what is expected of them.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following sources were used/referred to in the preparation of this report:-

Reports to, and minutes of, the Children & Young People's Social Care & Services Scrutiny Panel meetings: 21 September, 25 October, 22 November, 13 December 2021, 25 January & 21 February 2022.

Reports to the Executive: 8 October 2019, 18 February 2020.

Think Local, Act Personal' SCIE – 'Ten Actions for an Asset Based Area' December 2021, by Alex Fox OBE

Wigan Council website and 'The Deal' document.

COUNCILLOR D DAVISON CHAIR, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE & SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

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